



M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT  
06106

To: Participants in the CHRO Advisory Group  
From: Jeff Beckham, Undersecretary, O.P.M  
Date: May 12, 2008  
Re: Notice of Meeting for CHRO Advisory Group

This is to give notice that a meeting of the CHRO Advisory Group is scheduled for Monday, May 19, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in Room 410 at the State Capitol.

The agenda for this meeting is attached to this notice.

Thank you.

cc: Office of the Secretary of State of Connecticut



M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT  
06106

## **AGENDA**

### **Advisory Group on the CHRO, Diversity Law and Affirmative Action in State Agencies**

**May 19, 2008, 1:00 pm, Room 410, The Capitol**

1. Review of Minutes
2. Diversity survey
3. CHRO Executive Director
4. Members of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities



M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT  
06106

Advisory Group on the CHRO, Diversity Law &  
Affirmative Action in State Agencies  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
January 16, 2008

Present: Anne Noble, Kia Murrell, Debra Forster, Angela Rola, Natalie Holder-Winfield, Deb Freund, Deb Polun, Teresa Younger, Alice Pritchard, Amy Miller, Michelle Duprey, David Metzger, Fernando Betancourt, Jeffrey Beckham, Barbara Collins, Dawne Westbrook

Staff: Adam Jeamel and Nora Duncan (Governor's Office)

Guests: Ray Pech, CHRO

---

**I. Introductions**

Due to the attendance of new members and staff, the Advisory Group began the meeting with brief introductions.

**II. Review of Minutes**

The Advisory Group approved the minutes from the December 20, 2007 meeting.

**III. Report by CWEALF**

Amy Miller, the Program and Public Policy Director for CWEALF, detailed the organization's "Strategies for Enhancing the System" when it comes to CHRO. She reported that from 2003 to 2004, CWEALF compiled information from client feedback, attorney interviews, CHRO public hearings, annual reports and other states' systems to understand the flaws in our current system and develop recommendations.

Some of the challenges individuals face when it comes to discrimination complaints include: people discriminated against do not know there is a state agency that investigates allegations; not all CHRO offices have toll-free numbers; many people are unaware of the deadlines and timelines when it comes to the CHRO process; and common challenges that confront litigants proceeding pro se are the lack of resources available to them through the process.

Amy also gave a brief overview of Massachusetts and New York systems in comparison to the CHRO.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT  
06106

M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

Amy concluded her report with recommendations from CWEALF, which includes ideas to place a greater emphasis on community education; access to the CHRO and pertinent information from the agency; hire more investigators to examine complaints; and extend the amount of time for a complainant to file a case with CHRO – and many other recommendations.

Before the presentation by Ray Pech, Anne Noble led the discussion on other matters including creating a focus group or subcommittee to look at drafting recommendations for the Advisory Group to consider.

The Advisory Group decided it would be helpful for one person to identify and prioritize the issues regarding CHRO raised to date. Alice Pritchard and Natalie Holder Winfield agreed to do so and will present that information at the next meeting.

The next concern raised was who should take incoming calls, e-mails or letters. After discussion and various ideas, CWEALF also volunteered to allow the group to use their general e-mail box as well as their fax. Michelle Duprey will continue her outreach with the disability community and Teresa Younger agreed to be the primary source for people to call. Kia Murrell will conduct outreach to the state's business community.

There was also discussion over whether OPM should solicit feedback from AG agency designees. The Advisory Group agreed to hold off.

#### **IV. Presentation by Ray Pech and Questions from Advisory Group**

Ray Pech introduced himself and gave details on his professional background as it relates to CHRO. He reassured the Advisory Group that the essential work of CHRO gets done and they do not let negative publicity obscure CHRO's achievements.

Ray admitted there are issues with CHRO and areas of improvement: CHRO's process can be too long and they are looking at ways to address the problem; they take complaints from anyone who comes to CHRO because there is no recourse (they would like a change to allow CHRO to turn people away but give them the ability to appeal); CHRO is being evicted from their current location (April); they have half the number of people than they did five years ago doing certain work; the basic data they depend on (Census figures) are out-of-date by the time they are able to access it; and contract compliance is one of the most crucial missions for the agency but it's not staffed correctly.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT  
06106

M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

An Advisory Group member asked Ray to explain the scope of the contracts CHRO looks at – he replied that they look at them all. Another member asked if they have jurisdiction over others besides public work contracts – Ray answered yes. The issue was raised that CHRO has not put out an annual report since 2004 – Ray agreed and assured the group that they expect one to be out in March/April 2008.

Other questions raised by the Advisory Group include: is there specialized training for employees to deal with disability issues (no); what's the job classification of investigators (varies greatly); is there formalized training for investigators (it's on the job training); how would you recommend expanding your staff (target recruitment); what's the turnover for investigators (it's slowed down over the past year); are you still doing annual reports on diversity training (I'm not certain); what are the technological resources CHRO needs to be more efficient (complain tracking system is inefficient); what's the average time between the point of contacting CHRO and getting an appointment (answers differed among the group); agency says there is a staff level problem – can that change if outside consultant looks at efficiency of agency; how much case load at CHRO is per se (do not have an answer); and are there certain staff assigned to disability cases (not certain) – among other questions.

**V. Report on Diversity Law in other States by Angela Rola**

Not taken up due to late hour.

**VI. Next Meeting**

Wednesday, February 13 at 3:00 pm in Room 410 of the State Capitol.



M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT  
06106

Advisory Group on the Commission on Human Rights and  
Opportunities (CHRO), Diversity Law &  
Affirmative Action in State Agencies  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
April 18, 2008

Present: Kia Murrell, Deb Freund, Teresa Younger, Alice Pritchard (via telephone), Jeffrey Beckham, Barbara Collins, Dawne Westbrook, Deb Migneault, Glen Cassis

Guests: James O'Neill, CHRO

---

**VII. Discussion of plan for next meeting**

The group decided to send out a revised memo to employees of the CHRO to solicit their views on issues and concerns about the commission's operations. The group also decided to invite the members of the commission to address the group at the group's next meeting and to invite the executive director to address the group for a second time.

**VIII. Discussion of subgroups and research tasks**

The group decided to have volunteer members of the group take on particular research or writing tasks to facilitate future discussions.

Barbara Collins, David Metzger and Dawne Westbrook agreed to refine the findings and recommendations documents previously drafted by the CWEALF staff and prepare a draft set of recommendations for the group to consider making to the Governor concerning the operations of the CHRO.

A group consisting of Kia Murrell, Angela Rola, Natalie Holder-Winfield and Michelle Duprey was to be asked to take a look at the issue of diversity training and compliance and also make a set of recommendations for the group to consider.

Deb Freund and Teresa Younger agreed to prepare recommendations on affirmative action, including a look at updating the regulations.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT  
06106

M. JODI RELL  
GOVERNOR

**IX. Report on Diversity Law in other States**

To be taken up at next meeting.

**X. Next Meeting**

Monday, May 19 at 1:00 pm in Room 410 of the State Capitol.